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SAIVAM

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His Holiness Subramania Desika Gnanasambanda
Paramacharya Swamigal

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His Holiness
Subramania Desika Gnanasambanda Paramacharya Swamigal
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INTRODUCTION

This booklet 'Saivam' is presented to the Public in token of offering Blessings and according welcome by His Holiness Subramania Desika Gnanasambandha Paramacharya Swamigal, Adhinakarthar of Dharmapuram Adhinam to our beloved Srijat. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister on his return from his historic tour of America, enhancing the prestige of our Mother-land and serving an eye-opener of the greatness of the East.

CONTENTS


BALU
BROS

THE DANCE OF SIVA

"The Lord of Tillai's Court a mystic
dance performs: what's that, my dear?

—*Tiruvachagam XII, 14.*

A great master-of-dancing (Natarja) is Siva! The cosmos is His theatre, there are many different steps in His repertory, He Himself is actor and audience—

When the Actor beateth the drum,
Everybody cometh to see the show:
When the Actor collecteth the stage properties
He abideth alone in His happiness.

How many various dances of Siva are known to His worshippers I cannot say. No doubt the root idea behind all of these dances is more or

less one and the same, the manifestation of primal rhythmic energy: Siva is the Eros Protogonos of Lucian, when he wrote:

> It would seem that dancing came into being at the beginning of all things, and was brought to light together with Eros, that ancient one, for we see this primeval dancing clearly set forth in the choral dance of the constellations, and in the planets and fixed stars, their interweaving and interchange and orderly harmony.

I do not mean to say that the most profound interpretation of Siva's dance was present in the minds of those who first danced in frantic, and perhaps intoxicated energy, in honour of the Pre-Aryan hill-god, afterwards merged in Siva. A great motif is religion or art, any great symbol, becomes all things to all men; age after age it yields to men such treasure as they find in their own hearts. Whatever the origins of Siva's dance, it became in time the noblest image of *activity* of God which any art or religion can boast of. Of the various dances of Siva I shall only speak of three, one of them alone forming the main subject of interpretation. One is an evening dance in the Himalayas, with a divine chorus, described as follows in the Siva Pradosha Stotra—

"Placing the Mother of the Three Worlds upon a golden throne, studded with precious gems, Sulapani dances on the heights of Kailas, and all the gods gather round Him."

"Sarasvati plays on the *vina*, Indra on the flute, Brahma holds the time-marking cymbals, Lakshmi begins a song, Vishnu plays on a drum, and all the gods stand round about."

"Gandharvas, Yakshas, Patagas, Uragas, Siddhas, Sadhyas, Vidhyadharas, Amaras, Apsaras and all the beings dwelling in the three worlds assemble there to witness the celestial dance and hear the music of the divine choir at the hour of twilight."

This evening dance is also referred to in the invocation preceding the Katha Sarit Sagara.

In the pictures of this dance, Siva is two-handed, and the co-operation of the gods is clearly indicated in their position of chorus. There is no prostrate Asura trampled under Siva's feet. So far as I know, no special interpretations of this dance occur in Saiva literature.

The second well-known dance of Siva is called the *Tandava*, and belongs to His *tamasic* aspect as Bhairava or Virabhadra. It is performed in cemeteries and burning grounds, where Siva,

usually in ten armed form, dances wildly with Devi, accompanied by troops of capering imps. Representations of this dance are common amongst ancient sculptures, as at Ellora, Elephanta, and also at Bhuvanesvara. This *tandava* dance is in origin that of a pre-aryan divinity, half-god, half-demon, who holds his midnight revels in the burning ground. In later times, this dance in the cremation ground, sometimes of Siva, sometimes of Devi, is interpreted in Saiva and Sakta literature in a most touching and profound sense.

Thirdly, we have the Nadanta dance of Nataraja before the assembly (sabha) in the golden hall of Chidambaram or Tillai, the centre of the Universe, first revealed to gods and rishis after the submission of the latter in the forest of Taragam, as related in the Koyil Puranam. The legend, which has after all, no very direct connection with the meaning of the dance, may be summarised as follows:

In the forest of Taragam dwelt multitudes of heretical rishis, following of the Mimamsa. Thither proceeded Siva to confute them, accompanied by Vishnu disguised as a beautiful woman. The rishis were at first led to violent dispute amongst themselves, but their anger was soon directed against Siva, and they endeavoured to destroy Him by means of incantations. A fierce tiger

was created in sacrificial fires, and rushed upon Him; but smiling gently, He seized it and, with the nail of His little finger stripped off its skin, and wrapped it about Himself like a silken cloth.* Undiscouraged by failure, the sages renewed their offerings, and produced a monstrous serpent, which, however, Siva seized and wreathed about His neck like a garland. Then He began to dance; but there rushed upon Him a last monster in the shape of a malignant dwarf, Muyalaka. Upon him the God pressed the tip of His foot, and broke the creature's back, so that it writhed upon the ground; and so, His last toe prostrate, Siva resumed the dance, witnessed by gods and rishis.

Then Ati Seshan worshipped Siva, and prayed above all things for the boon, once more to behold this mystic dance; Siva promised that he should behold the dance again in sacred Tillai, the centre of the Universe. The dance of Siva in Chidambaram or Tillai forms the motif of the South Indian copper images of Sri Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance. These images vary amongst themselves in minor details, but all express one fundamental conception. Before proceeding to enquire what these may be, it will be necessary to describe the image of Sri Nataraja as typically represented. The images then,

* A similar story is elsewhere related about an elephant; and these account for the elephant or tiger skin, which Siva wears.

represent Siva dancing, having four hands, with braided and jewelled hair of which the lower locks are whirling in the dance. In His hair may be seen a wreathing cobra, a skull, and the mermaid figure of Ganga; upon it rests the crescent moon, and it is crowned with a wreath of Cassia leaves. In His right ear He wears a man's earring, a woman's in the left; He is adorned with necklaces and armlets, a jewelled belt, anklets, bracelets, finger and toe-rings. The chief part of His dress consists of tightly fitting breeches, and He wears also a fluttering scarf (*angavastiram*) and a sacred thread. One right hand holds a drum (*damara, udukkai*), the other is uplifted in *abhaya, mudra* (do not fear): one left hand holds fire, the other points downward to the lifted foot. The right foot is pressed down upon the asura Muyalaka, a dwarf holding a cobra; the left foot is raised. There is a lotus pedestal, from which springs an encircling arch of glory, (*tiruvasi*), fringed with flame, and touched within by the hands holding drum and fire. The images are of all sizes, rarely if ever exceeding four feet in total height.

Even without reliance upon literary references, the interpretation of this dance would not be difficult. Fortunately, however we have the assistance of a copious contemporary literature, which enables us to fully explain not only the general significance of the dance, but equally, the

details of its concrete symbolism. Some of the peculiarities of the Nataraja images, of course, belong to the conception of Siva generally and not to the dance in particular. Such are the braided locks, as of a yogi: the Cassia garland: the skull of Brahma: the figure of Ganga, the Ganges fallen from heaven and lost in Siva's hair: the cobras: the different ear-rings, betokening the dual nature of Mahadev, 'whose half is Uma': the four arms. The drum also, is a general attribute of Siva, belonging to his character of Yogi, though in the dance, it has further a special significance. What then is the meaning of Siva's dance, as understood by Saivas? The dance is called Nadanta. Its essential significance is given in texts such as the following:

"Our Lord is the Dancer, who, like the heat latent in firewood, diffuses His power in mind and matter, and makes them dance in their turn."[1] [2]

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[1] காட்ட அனல்போல் உடல்கலந்து உயிரையெல்லாம்
ஆட்டுவிக்கும் நட்டுவன் நம்மண்ணலென எண்ணுய்.

[2] Kadavul Mamunivar's Tiruvatavurar Puranam, Puttarai-vathil, venracarukkam, stanza 75, translated by Nallasvami Pillai, *Sivajnanabodham*, p. 74. This could also be rendered:

Like heat latent in firewood, he fills all bodies:

Our Father dances, moving all souls into action, know ye!

Compare Eckhart, "Just as the fire infuses the essence and clearness into the dry wood, so has God done with man".

The dance, in fact, represents His five activities (Panchakritya), viz., Srishti (overlooking, creation, evolution), Sthiti (preservation, support), Samhara (destruction, evolution), Tirobhava (veiling, embodiment, illusion, and also, giving rest,) Anugraha, (release, salvation, grace). These, separately considered, are the activities of the deities Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Mahesvara and Sadasiva.

This cosmic activity is the central motif of the dance. Further quotations will illustrate and explain the more detaitled symbolisms. *Unmai Vilakkam*, verse 36, tells us :

"Creation arises from the drum : protection proceeds from the hand of hope : from fire proceeds destruction : from the foot holding down proceeds tirobhava; the foot held aloft gives mukti". Here mukti is the same as anugraha, release. It will be observed that the fourth hand points to this lifted foot, the refuge of the soul.

We have also the following from *Chidambara Mummani Kovai:*

"O my Lord, Thy hand holding the sacred drum has made and ordered the heavens and earth and other worlds and innumerable souls. Thy lifted hand protects the Chetana and Achetana Prapancha which Thou hast created. All these worlds are changed by Thy hand bearing fire. Thy sacred foot,

planted on the ground, gives an abode to the tired soul struggling in the toils of karma. It is Thy lifted foot that grants eternal bliss to those that approach Thee. These Five Actions are indeed Thy Handiwork)'.

The following verses from the Tirukuttu Darsana (Vision of the Sacred Dance), forming the ninth tantra of Tirumular's *Tirumantram*, expand the central motif further:

"His form is everywhere: all-pervading is His
Siva-Sakti:
Chidambaram is everywhere, everywhere His
dance:
As Siva is all and omnipresent,
Everywhere is Siva's gracious dance made
manifest.

"His five-fold dances are in sakala and nishkala
form,
His five-fold dances are His Panchakritya:
With His grace He performs the five acts,
This is the sacred dance of Uma-Sahaya*

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* ஆன நடமைந் தகள சகளத்தர்
ஆன நடமாடி ஐங்கரு மத்தாக
ஆன தொழிலரு ளாலைந் தொழிற்செய்தே
தேன்மொழி பாகன் திருநட மாடுமே.

"He dances with Water, Fire, Wind and Ether,
Thus our Lord dances ever in the court.[1]

"Visible to those who pass over Maya and
Mahamaya
Our Lord dances His eternal dance.[2]

"The form of the Sakti is all bliss (ananda)—
This united bliss is Uma's body:
This form of Sakti arising in sakala
And uniting the twain is the dance"[3]

"His body is Akas, the dark cloud therein is
Muyalaka,
The eight quarters are His eight arms,

காளியோ டாடிக் கனகா சலத்தாடிக்
கூளியோ டாடிக் குவலயத் தேயாடி
[1] நீடிய நீர்தீகால் நீள்வா னிடையாடி
நாளுற அம்பலத் தேயாடும் நாதனே.

தீமுதல் ஐந்துந் திசையெட்டுங் கீழ்மேலும்
ஆயும் அறிவினுக் கப்புறம் ஆனந்தம்
[2] மாயைமா மாயை கடந்துநின் றார்காண
நாயகன் நின்று நடஞ்செய்யும் வாறே.

[3] சத்தி வடிவு சகல ஆனந்தமும்
ஒத்த ஆனந்தம் உமையவள் மேனியாஞ்
சத்தி வடிவு சகளத் தெழுந்திரண்
டொத்த ஆனந்தம் ஒருநட மாமே.

The three lights are His three eyes,
Thus becoming, He dances in our body as the
assembly (sabha).”[1]

This is His dance. Its deepest significance is felt when it is realised that it takes place within the heart and the self: the kingdom of God is within. Everywhere is God: that Everywhere is the heart. Thus also we find another verse:

“The dancing foot, the sound of the tinkling bells,
The songs that are sung and the varying steps,
The forms assumed by our Dancing Gurupara—
Find out these within yourself. then shall your
fetters fall away”[2]

To this end, all else but the thought of God must be cast out of the heart, that He alone may abide and dance therein. In *Unmai Vilakkam*.

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[1] ஆகாச மாமுட லங்கார் முயலகன்
ஏகாச மாந்திசை யெட்டுந் திருக்கைகண்
மோகாய முக்கண்கள் மூன்றொளி தானாக
மாகாய மன்றுள் நடஞ்செய்கின் றானே.

[2] ஆடிய காலும் அதிர்சிலம் போசையும்
பாடிய பாட்டும் பலவான நட்டமுங்
கூடிய கோலங் குருபரன் கொண்டாடத்
தேடியு ளேகண்டு தீர்ந்தற்ற வாறே.

"The silent jnanis destroying the threefold bond are established where their selves are destroyed. There they behold the sacred and are filled with bliss. This is the dance of the Lord of the assembly, "whose very form is Grace".[1]

With this reference to the 'silent jnanis' compare the beautiful words of Tirumular:

"When resting there they (the yogis who attain the highest place of peace) lose themselves and become idle...Where the idlers dwell is the pure Space. Where the idlers sport is the Light. What the idlers know is the Vedanta. What the idlers find is the deep sleep therein".[2]

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[1] மோனந்த மாமுனிவர் மும்மலத்தை மோசித்துத்
தானந்த மானிடத்தே தங்கியிடும்—ஆனந்தம்
மொண்டருந்திநின்றாடல்காணும்அருள்மூர்த்தியாக்
கொண்டதிரு அம்பலத்தான் கூத்து.

[2] இருந்தார் சிவமாகி எங்குந் தாமாகி
இருந்தார் சிவன்செயல் யாவையும் நோக்கி
இருந்தார் முக்காலத் தியல்பைக் குறித்தங்
கிருந்தார் இழவுவந் தெய்திய சோம்பே.

சோம்பர் இருப்பது சுத்த வெளியிலே
சோம்பர் கிடப்பது சுத்த வெளியிலே
சோம்பர் உணர்வு சுருதி முடிந்திடஞ்
சோம்பர்கண் டாரச் சுருதிக்கண் தூக்கமே.

Siva is a destroyer and loves the burning ground. But what does He destroy? Not merely the heavens and earth at the end of a kalpa, but the fetters that bind each separate soul. Where and what is the burning ground? It is not the place where our earthly bodies are cremated, but the heart of the bhakta, the devotee, laid waste and desolate. He brings not peace but a sword. The place where their selves are destroyed signifies the place or state where their egoity or illusion and deeds are burnt away: *that* is the crematorium, the burning-ground where Sri Nataraja dances, and whence He is named Sudalaiyadi, Dancer of the burning-ground. In this simile, we recognize the historical connection between Siva's gracious dance as Nataraja, and His wild dance as the demon of the cemetery.

This conception of the dance is current also amongst Saktas especially in Bengal, where the Mother rather than the Father-aspect of Siva is adored. Kali* is here the dancer, for whose entrance the heart must be purified by fire, made empty by renunciation. A Bengali Hymn to Kali voices this prayer:

* Vide article on "What is Kali?" in, S. D. Vol. III, p. 13.—*Ed. S. D.*

"Because Thou lovest the Burning-ground,
I have made a Burning-ground of my heart—
That Thou, Dark one, haunter of the Burning-ground,
Mayest dance Thy eternal dance."*

"Nought else is within my heart, O Mother:
Day and night blazes the funeral pyre:
The ashes of the dead, strewn all about,
I have preserved against Thy coming,
With death conquering Mahakala neath Thy feet
Do Thou enter in, dancing Thy rhythmic dance,
That I may behold Thee with closed eyes".

Returning to the South, we find that in other Tamil texts the purpose of Siva's dance is explained. In *Sivagnana Siddhiyar*. Supakka, Sutra V, 5, we find,

"For the purpose of securing both kinds of fruit to the countless souls, our Lord, with actions five, dances His dance". Both kinds of fruit, that is *Iham*, reward in this world, and *Param*, bliss in Mukti.

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*உலகமே உருவ மாக யோனிகள் உறுப்ப தாக
இலகுபே ரிச்சா ஞானக் கிரியையுட் கரண மாக
அலகிலா உயிர்ப்பு லன்கட் கறிவினை யாக்கி ஐந்து
நலமிகு தொழில்க ளோடும்நா டகம்நடிப்பன்நா தன்.

Again, *Unmai Vilakkam*, v. 32, 37, 39 inform us

"The Supreme Intelligence dances in the soul......for the purpose of removing our sins. By these means, our Father scatters the darkness of Maya, burns the thread of Karma, stamps down Mala (*anava, avidya*), showers Grace, and lovingly plunges the soul in the ocean of bliss (*Ananda*). They never see rebirths, who behold this mystic dance".*

The conception of Lila, the world-process as the Lord's sport or amusement, is also prominent

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*எட்டும் இரண்டும் உருவான லிங்கத்தே
நட்டம் புதல்வா நவிலக்கேள்—சிட்டன்
சிவாயநம வென்னுந் திருவெழுத்தஞ் சாலே
அவாயமற நின்றாடு வான்.

மாயை தனைஉதறி வல்வினையைச் சுட்டுமலம்
சாய அமுக்கிஅருள் தானெடுத்து—நேயத்தால்
ஆனந்த வாரிதியில் ஆன்மாவைத் தானழுத்தல்
தானெந்தை யார்பரதம் தான்.

உரையுணர்வுக் கெட்டா ஒருவன் மிகுபஞ்சாக்
கரத்தால் வரைமகடான் பாதி—பரையிடமாக்
காணும் படியே கருணையுருக் கொண்டாடல்
பேணுமவர்க் குண்டோ பிறப்பு.

in the Saiva scriptures; thus, Tirumular writes: "The Perpetual Dance becomes His Play"

This aspect of His activity appears to have given rise to the objection that He dances as do those who seek to please the eyes of mortals; to which the answer is given that He dances to maintain the life of the cosmos and to give release to those who seek Him.

In another way, more arbitrary, the Dance of Siva is identified with the Panchakshara, the five syllables Si-va-ya-na-ma, which have a peculiar and special significance in Saiva symbolism. In *Unmai Vilakkam*, v. 33-35 they are identified in the dance as follows:

"In His feet is *na*; in His naval is *ma*; in His shoulders is *Si*; in His face is *va*; in His head is *ya*".*

A second way of contemplating the Panchakshara is also given, as follows:

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* ஆடும் படிகேள்நல் அம்பலத்தான் ஐயனே
நாடுந் திருவடியி லேநகரம்—கூடும்
மகரம் உதரம் வளர்தோள் சிகரம்
பகருமுகம் வா முடியப் பார்.

"The hand holding the Drum is '*Si*'; the hand held out is '*Va*'' the hand holding out protection (abhaya) is *ya*; the hand holding fire is *na*; the foot holding down Muyalaka is *ma*".[1]

The text continues:

"The meanings of the five letters respectively are God, Sakti, Soul, Tirobhava and Mala...If this beautiful Five Letters be meditated upon, the soul will reach the land where there is neither light nor darkness, and there Sakti will make it One with Sivam''.[2]

Another verse of *Unmai Vilakkam* explains the fiery arch (tiruvasi): The Panchakshara and the Dance are identified with the mystic syllable

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[1] *சேர்க்கும் துடிசிகரஞ் சிக்கனவா வீசுகரம்*
ஆர்க்கும் யகரம் அபயகரம்—பார்க்கிலிறைக்(கு)
அங்கி நகரம் அடிக்கீழ் முயலகனார்
தங்கும் மகரமது தான்.

[2] *ஈசன் அருள் ஆவி யெழிலார் திரோதமலம்*
ஆசிலெழுத் தஞ்சி னடைவாம்.

அண்ணல் முதலா யழகா ரெழுத்தைந்தும்
எண்ணி லிராப் பகலற் றின்பத்தே—நண்ணி
யருளா னதுசிவத்தே யாக்கு மணுவை
யிருளா னதுதீர வின்று.

Om, the arch being the kombu or hook of the ideograph of the written symbol: "The arch over Sri Nataraja is Omkara; and the akshara which is never separate from the Omkara is the contained splendour. This is the Dance of the Lord of Chidambaram".[1]

The *Tiru-Arul-Payan* however (Ch. IX. 3) explains the *tiruvasi* more naturally as representing the dance of Nature, contrasted with Siva's dance of wisdom,

"The dance of matter (Prakriti) proceeds on one side: the jnana dance on the other. Fix your mind in the centre of the latter".[2]

I am indebted to Mr. Nallasvami Pillai for a commentary on this:

The first dance is the action of matter—material and individual energy. This is the arch, tiruvasi, Omkara, the dance of Kali. The other is

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[1] ஓங்கார மேநல் திருவாசி யுற்றதனின்
நீங்கா வெழுத்தே நிறைசுடராம்—ஆங்காரம்
அற்றார் அறிவரணி யம்பலத்தா னாடலிது
பெற்றார் பிறப்பற்றார் பின்.

[2] ஊன நடன மொருபா லொருபாலாம்
ஞானநடந் தானடுவே நாடு.

Dance of Siva—the akshara inseparable from the Omkara—called ardhamatra or the fourth letter of the Pranava, Chaturtam and Turiyam. The first dance is not possible unless Siva wills it and dances Himself.

The general result of this interpretation of the arch is, then, that it represents matter, nature, prakriti; the contained splendour, Siva dancing within and touching the arch with head, hands and feet, is the universal omnipresent Purusha. Between these stands the soul, as *ya* is between *Si-va* and *na-ma*.

Now to summarise the whole interpretation we find that *The Essential Significance of Siva's Dance is three-fold: First, it is the image of his Rhythmic Activity as the Source of all Movement within the Cosmos, which is Represented by the Arch: Secondly, the Purpose of his Dance is to Release the Countless souls from the Snare of Illusion: Thirdly the Place of the Dance, Chidambaram, the Centre of the Universe, is within the Heart.*

In these notes I expressly refrain from all aesthetic criticism and have endeavoured only to translate the central thought of the conception of

Siva's dance from plastic to verbal expression, without reference to the beauty or imperfection of individual works. In conclusion, it may not be out of place to call attention to the grandeur of this conception itself as a synthesis of science, religion and art. How amazing the range of thought and sympathy of those rishi-artists who first conceived such a type as this, affording an image of reality, a key to the complex tissue of life, a theory of nature, not merely satisfactory to a single clique, or race, nor acceptable to the thinkers of one century only, but universal in its appeal to the Philosopher, the Bhakta, and the artist of all ages and all countries. In these days of specialisation, we are not accustomed to such a synthesis of thought; but for those who 'saw' such images as this, there could have been no division of life and thought into watertight compartments. Nor do we always realise, when we criticise the merits of individual works, the full extent of the creative power which, to borrow a musical analogy, could discover a *raga* so expressive of fundamental rhythms and so profoundly significant and inevitable.

Every part of such an image as this is directly expressive, not of any mere superstition or dogma, but of evident facts. No artist of today, however great, could more exactly or more wisely create an image of that Energy which science must postulate

behind all phenomena. If we would reconcile Time with Eternity, we can scarcely do so, otherwise than by the conception of alternations of phase extending over vast regions of space and great tracts of time.* Especially significant, then, is the phase alternation implied by the drum, and the fire which 'changes', not destroys. These are but visual symbols of the theory of the day and night of Brahma!

In the night of Brahma, Nature is inert, and cannot dance till Siva wills it: He rises from His rapture, and dancing sends through inert matter pulsing waves of awakening sound, and lo! matter also dances, appearing as a glory round about Him. Dancing, He sustains its manifold phenomena. In the fulness of time, still dancing, he destroys all forms and names by fire and gives new rest. This is poetry: but none the less, the truest science.

Again, this Nataraja is not only Truth, but Love: for, the purpose of His Dance is Grace, the giving of freedom to countless individual souls. Lastly, also, how supremely great in power and grace this dancing image must appear to all those who as artists have striven in plastic forms to give expression to their intuition of Life!

[*Oliver Lodge, Hibbert Journal, Vol. X, No. 2, 1911.]

It is not strange that the figure of Nataraja has commanded the adoration of so many generations past: we, familiar with all scepticisms, expert in tracing all beliefs to primitive superstitions, explorers of the infinitely great and infinitely small, are worshippers of Sri Nataraja still.

PRACTICE OF RELIGION

"Practice is better than precept" is an old saying which we would do well to keep always prominent in our view.

Every religion has its own practice, and it cannot be said that there is any religion without some practice or other to be observed. Religion, in fact, is a code of practices intended to regulate the life of man and to train him for his ultimate spiritual life. We are all now in the material plane and we all believe in a spiritual plane. Religion, is our guide to that plane and it prescribes various practices in order to guide us to that plane. The practices it so prescribes must necessarily be in the material plane as otherwise they will not be accessible to us and will therefore

be of no avail to us. We have to attain spirituality through materiality and our march from materiality to spirituality is no doubt an uphill work. The practices provided for this difficult task must have fully in view the nature of the spiritual plane we are aiming at, the nature of the material plane into which we are plunged, and our capacity to get ourselves extricated out of this material plane and to fit ourselves to the spiritual plane. The spiritual plane or the Divine presence which we aspire to attain is beyond the region of imitation while we are confined to that region. Limited as our knowledge is, we cannot have any idea of the unlimited region, and the religious practices, therefore, explain things to us symbolically just as a school boy is taught geography by means of a map, or geometry by means of diagrams. These practices are therefore of great value to us to have any idea of the region beyond and to render us fitted for the enjoyment of the bliss in that region. It will be altogether impossible to get to that plane without carefully and rigidly observing the practices prescribed for that purpose. Still, I am sorry to find that the importance of these practices is not realised by some of our people who think that these practices are entirely useless and all that is wanted is to have a correct idea of religious theories and dogmas. Religious practices are intended to enable us to correctly understand the theories of our religion, and to be benefitted by

such an understanding. We must understand that theories in themselves have no value unless they are of some practical use to us. We may draw largely on our imagination and build huge air-castles. They cannot be said to be of any use to us unless they are of some help to us in our practical life. Even such theories as are capable of benefiting us practically will not be of any avail to us unless we practise them and realise their benefits in our experience. Experience is the most effective of our Instructors and it is by experience our knowledge is cultivated and developed. Our *Sastras* say that in order to convince us of any truth, we require three kinds of proofs—Sruti, Yukti and anubava. Although the first two—Sruti and Yukti—are themselves of great help to us in finding out the truth, yet it is the third—Anubava: experience—that satisfies us of the acceptability of truths and confirms us in our conviction. Our life is in the main a bundle of experiences and this experience may be said to form and shape our destiny.

The after-life of our children depends largely, if not wholly, on the training we give them, and this training is simply a moulding of their habits and manners by practice. Practice contributes little by little to the formation of their habits and manners and even influences their instinct

and intellect. Education in general is the sum total of practical instruction, and we know that in every branch of education—be it medical, legal, mechanical, agricultural or commercial—great stress is laid on the practical side of it, and students are required to keep a fixed term in the practice of these professions. Without practice, education cannot be said to be sound at all, and I need hardly say that too much importance cannot be attached to the value of practice.

The value of practice being so high in the secular plane, its importance in the spiritual plane need not be doubted at all. The animal instinct in man is so strong and so powerful that it requires a strict training to tame him for a spiritual life The wilder an animal is, the greater must be the training required to tame it, and the greater the training is, the sooner it will be tamed.

All religious practices are intended to tame us for a spiritual life, and the Hindu religion could be seen to impose on us a series of such practices in every department of our life, so that religion may always be prominent in our view. Hindu religion is fully alive to the animal instinct in man, and it therefore submits him to a strict discipline, whenever and wherever it can possibly do so. As Hindus we have our religious practices to be observed in our eating

and drinking, in our working and resting, in our sleeping and awaking. Little by little and atom by atom are our habits formed; and even the most infinitesimal proportion of every activity of ours in the world – however trivial or however insignificant it may be – contributes in the aggregate to the formation of our habits. We know how tiny microscopic germs develop certain fatal diseases in our body. We cannot despise things because of their magnitude. We know how essential in schools it is that every detail of discipline has strictly to be observed, although the effect of such observance may not be apparent to us at the first sight. We know how careful we are in training our young ones and how even the most insignificant item of their daily life goes in the long run to the formation of their habits and manners. Exactly on the same line are our religious practices, and they may even be said to be of much greater, value and importance to us.

Religious practices are intended to train us for the spiritual region, and we are worse than little children in relation to that region. We require a systematic and strict training to qualify us for that region. We are not, of course, able to see how the trivial items of our training help the formation of our habit, but we could boldly assert from the result, that each item, however trivial it may be,

contributes its share to the ultimate result. We may call things trivial, but when we look to the cumulative effect of these trivials, the result will be found something wonderful. We must understand that a host of our actions affect us without our knowing them, and that we cannot therefore despise any of them because we do not see their effect. The stimulation of our intelligence, it is said, has three states—conscious state, subconscious state and superconscious state. The conscious state is the condition in which we are aware of things when they transpire in the region to which our capacity of knowing can extend. Subconscious state is the state in which our intelligence is affected without our knowledge of it; and superconscious state is the state in which we know things without the aid of our intellectual faculties. These three states are more fully described in our Sastras as the five *avastas—Jagra, Swapna, Sushupti, Turiya* and *Turiyateeta*. *Jagra* and *Svapna* fall under the conscious state, *Sushupti* and *Turiya* under the subconscious state and *Turiyateeta* is what is known as superconscious state. In the subconscious state which we may call for the present purpose *Turiya,* our intelligence is affected so subtly that we are not aware of those affections which collect together and attain a state of fuller or grosser development, and affect our conscious state and produce results that are cognizable by us. These affections are of great

value to us as they add materially to our intellect and improve our instinct. In fact every education that we receive may be said to be on these lines, because the training that we receive therein affects us unawares and makes its own impression in our intelligence. Our religious training is not very different from this. Religious practices contribute little by little to our subconscious intelligence and the result becomes perceptible only after accumulation. It is therefore a great mistake to despise religious practices because we do not see any good resulting out of them all at once.

And again what is our capacity of knowing things after all? The factors that affect us from different directions are innumerable and are of various kinds. We are affected by the atmosphere around us, by the climate we live in by the people we are associated with, by the food we eat, by the heavenly bodies that move in the sky, by our own past *karmas* and by our free will itself. Have we anything like a definite idea of the effects produced by any of these various causes? We can only be said to know of a very small radius around us—if at all we can be credited with knowing things. Compare with this the vast unknowable area beyond our tiny knowable area; the unknowable area is unlimited and if for a moment we calmly

think over the vast expanse of the region in which we are placed and of which we are quite in the dark, our boast cannot but strike us as an empty boast. Such being our position, we have no right to reject our time-honoured religious practices on the plea that we do not see any benefit accruing out of them.

It is because our knowledge is limited, we are in need of a religion and revelation; and God, in His unlimited mercy towards us, has given us such a religion and revelation. The revelation prescribes to us the practices we have to observe in the religious plane, and our limited knowledge is not competent to criticise those practices. Our revelation is our guide to the sphere to which our knowledge cannot extend, and we cannot therefore reject the help of that guide and depend on our limited knowledge for our march onward.

We have not only to be guided by our religion and revelation in this our journey onward, but we should pay due regard to the tradition that obtains in the community in which we are placed. Tradition is generally the result of the experience gained by our ancestors, and we may find several very useful instructions embodied in tradition. There is a tendency in our present generation—evidently the result of what we call modern civilisation—to

despise old ideas and ancient practices. We think that we are far wiser and more intelligent than our ancestors. This, I should think, is a hollow conceit. It may be that we are a bit wiser than our ancestors of the dark age that has just passed by. It cannot be agreed that the whole human race up till quite recently, were wholly merged in ignorance and that we are the only generation with enlightenment. Bright and dark ages follow each other in rotation—and this is our *Yuga dharma*. Because we open our eyes after a long slumber of intellectual darkness, we cannot say that the whole world has hitherto been totally blind. No one can deny that the ancient Rome and Greece, India and Persia, were enjoying a civilisation which it is not in our power to gauge. Any knowledge handed over to us from our ancestors of the enlightened age should certainly be honoured and respected by us, and not despised or rejected on the false pretext that we are ahead of them in enlightenment and civilisation. The dark age that has just passed by could not have worked out our various religious practices which are pregnant with sound principles and deep meanings. It is not therefore possible to attribute these practices to that age. There is sufficient evidence to show that these practices existed during the bright ages that preceded the dark age that has just passed by, and it would therefore not be possible to reject those practices on the ground that they are the outcome of ignorance, unless we are

prepared to contend that the bright ages in which our ancestors lived were themselves ages of ignorance and superstition. If we put forward such a contention, we will only betray our conceit and ignorance. It is a duty incumbent on us as human beings to respect and revere the traditions of past ages wherein is stored a large stock of valuable knowledge, unless or until we are convinced after satisfactory enquiry, that such traditions are only the outcome of ignorance and superstition. If we hesitate to accept those traditions and to be benefited by them, there will be very little difference between us and the brute creation. We must understand that, as human beings, we are largely benefited by the experience of past generations, and that our present generations commit a serious mistake in despising the experience and wisdom of our ancestors. I do not of course mean by this that we have to blindly follow whatever is laid down by our ancestors; we must certainly reject such practices as are found to be prejudicial to our interests. But this should be no reason to reject them entirely and to despise them as practices belonging to the primitive age.

Religious practices are not only ordained by our revelations but the importance of observing such practices has been fully confirmed by tradition or the experience of our ancestors. The benefit

of such observance may not be realised by us at once—and this is but quite natural. A child may not be able to realise the after effects of the training he is subjected to, and the training cannot therefore be dispensed with on that account.

I have already told you that the training that we undergo by means of our religious practices, contribute little by little to our subconscious intelligence. However trivial or imperceptible such contribution may be in individual cases, the effect of the training in the aggregate is very substantial. The mere fact that we do not actually see any benefit arising out of them in individual cases cannot therefore argue against the utility of those practices. Our intelligence cannot penetrate into the secrets within or into the mysteries without. It has no idea of the infinitesimally small atoms that affect us, or of the immensely large bodies that exert their influence over us. It cannot be said to have any idea of the millions of subtle influences that affect us in innumerable ways or of the enormous gross powers that sway over us. With such a very limited capacity of knowing things, it will be preposterous on our part to reject religious practices on the ground that we do not see any good arising out of them. A friend of mine very aptly compared our intelligence to that of a squirrel which, being frightened by some noise

at a distance, stood up on its hind legs, looked round and went away quite satisfied that there was nothing to be feared at. But it did not realise the fact that the extent to which its vision could extend was only a couple of feet around it. Our vision of things is only a little better than that of the squirrel, and still there is no end of our conceit. We cannot see things in this our Bandha state, and hence the necessity of revelation and religion. And when the religion wants you to practise certain formulae with a view to open your eyes, you say "I will not practise any of them before I am able to see" just like the man who refused to get into the water before he learnt to swim. You must have faith in your religion and you must observe the practices described by the religion—and the result will naturally follow.

Another argument used against the utility of religious practices is that there is no use in practising them without knowing in what way they will be of use to us. It is indeed very curious to find that such arguments are raised only in the religious plane. I am sure people will not dare to argue in this fashion in a great many questions affecting the secular plane. A patient will be considered a blunt fool if he refuses to take a medicine because he does not know its properties or their effects. Spiritual knowledge is on a much higher plane and it will be

a presumptive arrogance on our part to expect to know things in the spiritual plane before learning them by means of these practices. Religious practices will have their own effects, although we are not able to see their mysterious capacity. A medicine will have its own effect although we are not aware of its properties. It will certainly be of great advantage to decipher the meanings of our religious practices and to have a clearer idea of their capacity to produce the results they are expected to produce. But what I say is that we ought not to reject them, because we are not aware of their meanings and capabilities. The practices were formulated by Maha Rishis and Sadhus of olden days who had a clear view of the spiritual region and who were, so to say, inspired by Divine grace. We are not as perfect and clear sighted as they were to have an insight into the mystic region, but it is our duty to observe the rules laid down by them and enjoy their benefits. It is one of the ordinary rules of human nature to be guided by our preceptors, and we cannot in our mistaken notion of liberal views and independent spirit break that law of nature. There are a host of facts—facts too numerous to be reckoned by us—which are beyond the range of our consciousness and which still affect us to a considerable extent. We need not go outside of our body for a proof of this fact. Science tells us that when we see an object or hear a sound, our sense of vision or hearing is

flashed, as it were, to our brain centre through our nerve power, but we are not in the least conscious of this phenomenon and this is no reason not to recognise that phenomenon. I may say that the factors that affect us in the subconscious plane are comparatively speaking, immensely larger in number than those that affect us in the conscious plane; and it will be no exaggeration to say that the factors that affect us in the conscious plane can bear no comparison to those that affect us in the subconscious plane.

The training that a child undergoes when his intelligence is not developed affects his subconscious intelligence little by little, and the cumulative effect of such training shows itself out ultimately in his conscious intelligence. There is a piece of mystery involved in this department of knowledge culture, and it will be highly interesting to have a patient enquiry into that mystery. Our physical plane has an intimate connection with our mental plane which again is closely wedded to our spiritual plane. So that, anything that affects us in the physical plane will have its own influence on the mental plane, which will communicate that influence to the spiritual plane. The effect may be infinitesimally small, but it is the cumulative influence of these effects during innumerable births that secures to us the final salvation—though

slowly but surely. Our religious practices are symbolical of our realisation of certain truths, and when we perform those practices, the truths symbolised by them affect our subconscious intelligence, although in a very subtle manner quite imperceptible by our conscious intelligence. When the practice is repeated day by day, the subtle affection of the truth is also repeated in our subconscious intelligence, and the affection grows stronger and stronger by degrees till at last it shows itself out in the conscious intelligence. This phenomenon is fully borne out by the fact that by repeated endeavours made to solve out any intricate problem, the solution at last dawns in our mind, as if by inspiration. We have heard of cases where difficult problems, once given up as beyond solution, have again been solved after some time without any labour. These are instances where our subconscious intelligence comes across truths and communicates them to the conscious intelligence.

We must also bear in mind that every truth is pervaded by Sivasakti, or the force of Divine grace, and this Sivasakti is equally present in the symbol that represent the truth. When the symbol is availed of by a religious student, they come in close contact with that Sivasakti which makes its impression, through the medium of the symbol, on the practitioners, even if they are not aware of the

value of that symbol; just as a medicine has its own effect although the patient is not aware of its properties.

The training that we acquire by religious practices makes in our subconscious intelligence a subtle impression of the truths they represent, and this impression is of great value to us when we progress in the spiritual plane where it renders our work much easier. Children commit to memory passages without any idea of their meanings, and this committing to memory renders them material help when they are advanced and become competent to decipher their meanings. Religious practices are not only of great help to us for deciphering truths in our advanced state, but they afford to our subconscious intelligence ample scope to come in contact with those truths in a very subtle manner, under the guise of symbols.

Our soul again is *Chit* in its form, i. e., it is a glow of intelligence, and this intelligence is again said to be of the nature of crystal—fully capable of receiving an impression of whatever it comes in contact with. It is besides Divine in its nature and has the Divine omniscience for its support and mainstay. It has therefore the full capactiy of receiving an impression of truths when such truths are made to affect it either directly or indirectly.

But the soul being covered with the veil of Pasa, its vision of things is obstructed, and it is therefore the intelligence of the soul has to be stimulated in the *Bhanda* condition by organs and senses produced out of Maya. It receives impressions of truths through these organs and senses, but if these organs and senses are not powerful enough, such impressions will not be manifest in the conscious plane of that intelligence; but the soul being a pure intelligent Chit in its form, any impression however subtle it may be, will affect the subconscious plane of its intelligence and this is what is known as our துரியக்காட்சி (Thuriya Vision) or subconscious vision.

I am afraid I have stepped a bit into the abstract region of Hindu Philosophy; but this has been found necessary to explain the value of religious practices. Apart from the philosophic aspect of religious practices, they have their own value even if we look at them superficially—as mere services rendered in the name of God. Such services, even in the absence of any understanding of their true meaning or of their intrinsic value, will no doubt create in our mind a leaning towards spirituality and train our wild instinct for a higher state of life.

It is not possible at all to have a practical idea of things without practising the methods prescribed

for acquiring such idea, and this is particularly so in the spiritual plane. Unless we practise patiently and persistently the methods prescribed by religion we cannot be expected to possess the necessary qualifications required for the grades higher up. The religion says that all our practices are but gradatory steps to pure wisdom or *Jnanam* which only leads us to final salvation:—

> " விரும்புஞ்சரியை முதன்மெய்ஞ் ஞானநான்கும்
> அரும்புமலர் காய்கனிபோ லன்றோபராபரமே "

O God! Are not the four paths from Sariai to Jnanam just like bud, blossom, green fruit and ripe fruit?

I know that some of our countrymen who are under the influence of Western civilisation, and whose mode of life would not permit them the practices prescribed by our religion, think that these practices are only intended for the ignorant mass. This, I should say, is a serious mistake. The practices are intended for all—be they ignorant or enlightened—so long as they are in the material plane. So long as they have in them the *Ahankaram* and *Mamakaram*, or in short so long as they have in them their mental *Vrittis*, they require a strict training for which these practices are indispensable. Because we are enlightened in a

material point of view, we cannot say that we are enlightened in the spiritual plane itself, and that religious practices are not necessary for us. So long as we have in us our self, and so long as we are animated by our will power, we have to tame ourselves by strictly observing these practices, until we realise our oneness with God. According to our religion, these practices are highly essential to us until we lose ourself; and we should not give up any of them with our will power unless it be that they drop of themselves unawares. The practices are intended to extricate ourselves from the clutches of ourself, and it will be absurd to use the same self and give up the practices in our conceit that they are not necessary for us.

I do not of course mean to say that these practices are the direct means to our final salvation, or that they should be blindly followed without any endeavour on our part to understand their meanings and to adapt ourselves to such meanings. What I say is that these practices are as essential as any theoretical knowledge in the religious plane, or even much more so, in that they render us practically fit for the higher plane where empty theories will not be of any avail. I must say that a pound of practice is worth tons of theories. We must eat a fruit in order to taste it. Religion must be practised and not theorised.

I will therefore impress on all who are actually moved by a desire to be benefited in the spiritual plane, the necessity of strictly observing religious practices; and if they do so, I have no doubt the result will convince them of the value of those practices.

SAIVA SIDDHANTHAM

"GOD Siva owns the Southern-land and He is the Lord of all the realms", so sings Saint Manickavasagar. In the words of Dr. G. U. Pope, an ardent devotee, and translator of Thiruvasagam, "The Saiva Siddhantha system is the choicest product of the Dravidian intellect." The fundamental ideas of the system are ingrained in the structure of Tamil words themselves. For instance, the term 'Kadavul' (கடவுள்) is quite philosophic in its significance. It is a unique word for expressing the transcendental and immanent aspects of God. In one sense the word means, "that which is beyond" (thought, word, and body). This denotes the transcendental nature of God. In another sense it means, "that which moves everything." This reflects the immanence of God in the world. Terms

applied to God, in other languages are not so richly philosophic and are applicable not only to God but also to other things. For instance, the term "Brahmam" means 'big'. It may be applied to everything that is big, like the sea, the sky, the mountain, and so forth. The term "Vishuu" means pervasive; and, as such, it is applicable to elements like air and ether. But the term "Kadavul" is applicable only to the Almighty, the Ruler of the Universe, Who is beyond our conception and in Whom we live, move, and have our being.

Similarly, the term "Maya", taken as a Tamil word, consists of Mai (மாய்) and A (ஆ). Mai means "to conceal" and A means "to become". That foundamental substratum of matter into which everything resolves itself by involution and from which evolves in course of time, is indicated by the term "Maya". This meaning of the expression "Maya" is peculiar to Tamil and signifies on the part of Tamilians a knowledge of the first cause of evolution and involution. In other languages it means illusion and shows that which appears but is not really existing. Need-less, it is to give more examples of the philosophic significance of Tamil terms.

From the earliest book extant in Tamil, we find, that from time immemorial the Saiva Siddhantha Philosophy was the peculiar heritage of the

Tamilians. We cannot think of a time when the Tamilians had not this system among them. In the Tholkappiam, the terms Kadavul, uyir (உயிர்), mei (மெய்), Vinai (வினை), Kandazhi (கந்தழி), and the like, indicate that, even prior to its composition, the Tamilians were accustomed to think in terms of Saiva Siddhantha ideas. In Thirukkural, the principal concepts of the system find full expression. In times past, the system was known as Thiruneri, Peruneri, Senneri and so forth. The term Siva is, according to Dr. Grierson, a Tamil word which in earliest times entered into the Aryan language. There were different schools of this System expounding different shades of the fundamental ideas, so that the principal side of it was spoken of as Mudalneri and the author of Periyapuranam speaks of Saiva Siddhantha as Mudal-Saivaneri. When the Tamil system began to wear a sanskrit garb, the term Saiva, which is the adjectival form of Siva and Siddhantha, which means the end of ends, were combined to denote it. What was called the first and foremost of the Saiva creeds in Tamil was denominated as the highest and final Saiva System in Sanskrit. Since then, the Aryan expression Saiva Siddhantha has come largely into use and has almost superseded the original Tamil name for the system. It is a peculiar feature of the later day Dravidian mind to embody its original ideas in Aryan words and it is why Dr. Gilbert Slater said, "The

Dravidians were Aryanised in language, while the Aryans were dravidised in culture".

Not only in Tholkappiam and Thirukkural but also in every other masterpiece of Sangam literature, are found the cardinal tenets of Saiva Siddhantha system. Space forbids a detailed consideration of the philosophical ideas enshrined in it.

After the sangam age, the philosophy finds rich and beautiful expression in Thiruvasagam which is a collection of about fifty-one poems of unsurpassed spiritual experience and grandeur, for the splendid rendering of which into English, our thanks are due to Dr. G. U. Pope. This work belongs to the third or fourth century.

In the fifth and sixth centuries a number of devotional hymns by various Saiva Saints, form part of the Eleventh Tirumurai of the Saiva Scriptures. Three great works of the sixth century give ample expression to the Saiva Siddhanta concepts. Kalladam contains a series of poems which, though dealing with the romantic side of Tamilian life, is replete with Saiva Siddhantic ideas. Tirumular's Tirumanthram is a work of three thousand stanzas, said to be composed in the course of three thousand years, dealing with the practical and theoretical aspects of Saiva religion and philosophy,

in which we find the use of the expression 'Saiva Siddhantam' for the first time in Tamil literature, In it is found the treatment of Pathi, Pasu, and Pasam in the old method. Gnanamirtham is perhaps the earliest treatise, treating of the Siddhanta concepts in the modern scientific manner.

In the Seventh Century the rich devotional literature of Saint Tirugnana Sambandar and Appar, is based upon the realisation of truth according to the tenets of the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy. Saint Sundarar has added to this literature in the beginning of the ninth century. From the eighth to the tenth century Saivite and Vaishnavite Saints have enriched Tamil literature with spiritual poems having an undercurrent of Siddhanta sentiments. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries great medieval epics, like Periapuranam, Kandapuranam, and even Kamba Ramayanam present a back ground of the Siddhantic conceptions.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the great Siddhanta philosophical movement was inaugurated by Saint Meykandar who is the eminent author of Sivagnana Botham, the central work of the system. This work, though very brief, contains in a nut-shell a systematic expression of the system for the first time and as such, it may be said to commence the Siddhanta movement for modern times. It consists of twelve sutras combined with

logical propositions in prose and eighty-one verses in Venba metre. Saint Meykandar taught his philosophy to forty-nine disciples of his, who and whose descendants propagated and popularised the system by founding mutts and Adhinams in various parts of the Tamil Country, the foremost of the Adhinams being the one at Dharmapuram and the other at Tiruvavaduthurai. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there arose fourteen philosophical works, known as the standard Saiva Siddhanta Sastras. They are as follows:-Tiruvundiar, Tirukalitrupadiar, Sivagnana Botham, Sivagnana Siddhiar, Irupa-Irupahthu, Unmaivilakkam, Sivaprakasam, Tiruvarutpayan, Vina-venba, Portripahrodai, Kodikkavi, Nenjuviduthoothu, Unmaineri–vilakkam, and Sangarpaniraharanam.

Even before the date of Sivagnana–Botham, two books called Tiruvundiar and Tirukalitrupadiar claim our attention and they were written as the result of the spiritual experience of their authors, according to the Tamil method without openly touching upon the controversial creeds of the diverse schools. Tiruvundiar was composed by Saint Uyyavanda-deva-nayanar of Tiruviyalur, about the middle of the twelfth century. It is a small work of forty-five triplets dealing with the side of spiritual experience resulting from the pursuit of Siddhanta tenets. Tirukkadavur Uyyavanda-deva-nayanar was

the author of the Tirukalitrupadiar who was the disciple of the author of Tiruvundiar. Tirukalitrupadiar is a commentary in verse of the substance of Tiruvundiar and its date is about 1178 A. D. It comprises one hundred venbas, and throws light on many abstruse points in the interpretation of the lives of Periapuranam Saints. It expounds the dual aspect of God as Sivam and Sakti, and the higher forms of Yogam and Gnanam. It upholds the authority of Tiruvalluvar as an exponent of Siddhanta truths.

In the early years of the thirteenth century, Saint Meykandar appeared as the rising sun in the firmament of Saiva Siddhantam, and his work *Sivagnana Botham* opened the eyes of Tamilians to the supreme excellence of their ancient philosophy. It begins with an invocatory verse to the self-luminous Ganapthy from whom the poet and philosopher drew his inspiration. It also hints at the decent of truth from God Siva as Guru on Mount Kailas. The prefatory stanza strikes a note of majesty in respecting the Great who have known themselves and God, and in rejecting the imperfect creeds of others. Every one of the twelve sutras of the work is divided into separate parts called Adikaranams and there are about thirty-nine Adikaranams in all, which include the eighty-one venba verses of the work. The twelve sutras are divided

into four parts. The first part deals with the existence of God, Soul, and Bonds; the second part with their nature and attributes, so that the first six sutrams cover the field of intellectual investigation. The third part deals with the method of pursuing the Truth and the fourth with the realisation of the same, so that the last six sutrams pertain to the domain of spiritual experience.

Out of the forty-nine disciples of Saint Meykandar, the first happened to be Arulnandi Sivachariar, who was originally Meykandar's family priest and who had to bow to the superior spirituality of the Boy-Saint. He is the author of *Sivagnana Siddhiar* the biggest of the Fourteen Sastras. It comprises of two parts, parapaksham and supaksham, the former enunciating and criticising the doctrines of twelve alien systems and the latter treating in detail of the principles of Saiva Siddhanta. It follows the method of Sivagnana Botham in expounding Siddhanta truths. The greatness of the work is attested by the saying in Siva-Boga-Saram of Guru-Gnanasambandar, the founder of Darmapuram mutt "பாரிலுள்ள நூலெல்லாம் பார்த்தறியச் சித்தியிலே ஒரு விருத்தப் பாதிபோதும். (It is enough to master the meaning of half the verse of Sivagnana Siddhiar

rather than traverse all the wide field of philosophy in the world)".

There are more than six classical commentaries on the work by ascetic disciples of diverse Saiva Mutts in the Tamil country and the biggest Bashyam on the grand work is by Saint Velliambala Thambiran of Darmapuram Adhinam. It goes by the name of Gnanaparana Vilakkam and is yet to see the light of day.

Saint Arulnandi Sivachariar is also the author of *Irupa-Irupahthu*, which, though smaller in size, raises a number of philisophical questions addressed to Meykandar, the solving of which is hinted at and will give one a complete understanding of the intricacies of the system.

Unmaivilakkam is one of the fourteen sastras, written by Manavasagamkadanthar, another disciple of Meykandar who has briefly but clearly described the nature of the thirty-six tatwas, the nature of soul and God, the meaning of Siva's Dance and the symbolic representation of Panchaksharam in the holy figure of the Dancer.

Arulnandi Sivachariar's disciple's disciple, Umapathy Sivachariar of Chidambaram was himself a Dikshidar of the place. He is the author of the other eight sastras of the group. His first work

Sivaprakasam clearly summarises the substance of Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy in one hundred stanzas. In its preface he describes the hierarchy of Gurus in the spiritual line, starting from God Siva of Mount Kailas. The stanza describing the nature of Saiva Siddhantham is remarkably lucid and comprehensive and can be rendered as follows:—

"We intend to expound herein the truths of of the Saiva Siddhantha System, the distilled essence of the Vedanta and which is dark to the heathen and bright to the adherents of inner creeds and satisfying the reputed standards of logic, and which is remarkable for advocating such inseparable Adwaitic (two-less) union of God and the world, as will not warrant their substantial identity like gold and jewels made of it; or their opposition like light and darkness or any midway relation like that of word and sense. Such union will be comparable in their unity to the blending of body and soul and in their diversity to the light of the eye and the light of the sun and in their concomitance to the knowing power of the soul and seeing power of the eye, and will be realisable as the fruit of a course of righteous pratice ordained by great books of wisdom."

The work briefly defines Pathi, Pasu, and Pasam in its first part which covers the first fifty

stanzas and in the second part of it are expounded the special nature of the Soul and God, the methods of approaching the Almighty and realising His bliss and the characteristics of great men who have realised the truth.

Tiruvarutpayan is a work of one hundred couplets divided into ten equal parts forming a supplement to Tiruvalluvar's Tirukkural. The work is often regarded as the 'Veettupal', which is an addition to the *muppal* of Tirukkural. The titles of the ten parts are quite significant of their subject-matter. This work has been translated into English by Dr. G. U. Pope, in his introduction to his grand edition of Tiruvasagam.

Vina-Venba is a small work treating of the subtle nature of knowledge, the knower, and the known, in the form of questions. By the way, it enlightens us as to how one can get rid of the bonds and attain Adwaitic Contact with God.

Portripahrodai is a pretty long poem in Venba metre addressed to Siva, the Dancer, in the form of a petition, and it enunciates the spiritual experiences of its author. It shows how God leads the soul from the stage of bonds to the stage of salvation in an attitude of pure grace.

Kodikkavi is a small booklet sung by the poet with a view to facilitate the spontaneous mounting of the flag in the temple of Nataraja at Chidambaram. It describes the object of the flag hoisting and the nature of the Saiva Mantras and indirectly relate the function of God's Grace.

Nenjuviduthoothu represents the message sent to God (Guru) through the medium of the Mind. It is a fine poem narrating the greatness of God, the nature of Bonds, and the symbolism of the ten paraphernalia of God, as King. It is remarkable as quoting the authority of Tiruvalluvar in its description of the path of Wisdom.

Unmainerivilakkam is a work on the high path of salvation which ascends by ten steps to the ultimate God. The steps are Tatwarupam (the form of tatwas), Tatwadarsanam (the nature of tatwas), Tatwasuddhi (the clearing of the tatwas). Atmarupam (the form of the soul), Atmadarsanam (the nature of the soul), Atmasuddhi (the purification of the soul), Sivarupam (realising the sight of God), Siva Darsanam (understanding the nature of God), Siva-yogam (union with God), and Siva-bogam (realising Supreme Bliss).

Sankarpanirakaranam purports to give an account of the controversy that took place in the

temple of Chidambaram, on the sixth day of Ani-festival, in the year 1235 of Salivahana era which corresponds to 1313 A. D., among the adherents of diverse systems of philosophy, who had assembled in the temple. The theories of eight systems are enunciated and refuted in a masterly manner. They are those of Mayavathi (so called Vedantins), Iykyavathi, Pashanavathi, Bedavathi, Sivasamavadi, Sivasankranthavathi, Suddha-saiva and Sivadwaita. Except Mayavatham, the other theories stated and refuted here have not been dealt with explicitly in Sivagnana Siddhiar, so that the Parapaksham of Sivagnana Siddhiar and Sangarpanirakaranam are complementary to each other and cover the whole field of alien systems which prevailed in this country in the fourteenth century and earlier.

Umapathi Savachariar perpetuated his line of Gurus by initiating Arulnamasivaya Desigar in spiritual wisdom. His disciple's disciple, Namasivaya Desigar is the founder of the Tiruvavaduthurai Adhinam. Another line of Gurus, descending from Umpathi Sivachariar is represented by Guru Gnanasambandar, the first head of the Darmapuram Adhinam. The line before the founder of the Mutt consists of the following Gnanachariars. They are Arulnamasivaya Desigar, Gangai-meikandar, Sitrambalanadigal, Thattuvaprakasar, Chettitheru Gnanaprakasar, Kamalai Gnanaprakasar. The heads

of these mutts are called Pandarasannathis and their ascetic disciples are named Thambirans. These two Adhinams have been great centres of spiritual enlightenment for more than four hundred years in the past and have given birth to a vast cycle of Saiva Siddhanta Literature.

The works of Padarasannathis are called *Pandarasastrams.* Sri Ambalavana Desigar, disciple of Namasivaya Desigar was the author of ten works, Dasakariam, Sanmarga Siddhiar, Sivasrama thelivu, Siddhantha Pahrodai, Siddhanta Sikamani, Upayanittai venba, Upathesa Venba, Nittai-vilakkam, Athisayamalai and Namasivaya-malai. In addition to these, Dasakariam and Upathesa Pahrodai of Dhakshinamoorthy Desigar, Dasakariam of Isana Desigar and Panchakkara Pahrodai of Pin-Velappa Desigar constitute the fourteen Pandarasastrams of Tiruvavaduthurai Adhinam. A number of various other works have been written by various Thambirans from time to time and it is needless to detail them here. The great intellectual luminary called Sivagnana Munivar who flourished as the greatest poet, philosopher, commentator, and critic of the eighteenth century has immortalised Sivagnana Botham by his inimitable commentary called Sivagnana-Bashyam which is also called Dravida - Maha - Bashyam.

Coming to Dharmapuarm Adhinam, Sitrambala Nadigal who flourished prior to its founder at Siddharkadu near Mayuram, had sixty four disciples. He was the author of several works like Thukalarubotham. Tiruvarur Gnanaprakasar, the Guru of the founder, wrote Putpavidhi, Prasatha Kattalai, Aththuvakattalai, Siva-puja Akaval etc, The founder is the author of Sivabhogasaram Chockanatha Venba, Tiripathartharupathi Dasakariyam, Mukthi-nichchayam, etc. There are two commentaries one brief and the other elaborate for Mukthi-nichchayam by Velliambala Thambiran who flourished in the time of the fifth head of the Adhinam. They have been published by the Dharmapuram Adhinam. The same Velliambala Thambiran was the author of the huge commentary of Sivagnana Siddhiar already mentioned i. e., Gnanaparanavilakkam. Among numerous other works and publications of this Adhinam, Gnanaprakasar's Dasakariam, Pathi-pasu-Pasa-Thogai, Sampradaya Deepam, Gnanaparana Vilakka Kural, Siddhantha Nichchayam, Mrigendara Agama (Tamil Translation), Sivanubogasaram require special mention. So also a sanskrit commentary by Satchidananda Desigar of this Adhinam on Sivagnana Siddhiar. So much about the literature on the subject.

The subject matter of this system of philosophy falls into two parts, one consisting of investigation

of truth and the other of spiritual experience. We will here briefly deal with the first part, reserving the details for advanced exposition at a latter day.

The truth as enunciated by spiritual seers are canvassed in the light of logic. The arguments lead us from the seen to the unseen.

The first sutram speaks about the existence of God as proved by analysis of the nature and phenomena of the seen world. The Siddhantic view is that the world is real. It is indicated by saying that the things of the world are spottable as He, She, and It. When a thing can be permanently pointed out as perceptible to the senses, it is counted as real though subject to change. When water may be identified as such for all times, there is no illusion about it. If a mirage looks like water, its watery appearance vanishes as we approach it. That it is a mirage is real, but its appearance as water is an illusion. Similarly everything whose identity may be fixed permanently by the senses, should be taken to be real and not illusory. A synthesis of real things being the world, the world should be real, and not an illusion, as the Mayavathins state it to be. Further, if the world is not real, what is the good of discussing about the maker of it ? So the first thing to be borne in mind is the reality of the

world in order that we may make an investigation about its creator.

Then the world consists of intelligent and unintelligent beings. The intelligent world is again divisible into male and female which shows that there is an intelligent purpose for such a division. The unintelligent world ministers to the needs of the intelligent and is controlled thereby. Hence the phenomena of the world should be governed by intelligence. Taking our body, for example, the intelligent soul governs the unintelligent body, but the soul dwelling in a body cannot control the processes taking place in the wide world. Every unintelligent thing in the world is moved by an intelligent being. This leads us naturally to the conclusion that the unintelligent world undergoing several processes should be moved by a supreme intelligence.

It may be said, just as the nature of the water is to flow, the nature of the world is to move by itself. That conclusion is not warranted because the tendency of nature is not applicable to the processes of the world. Nature must tend in one way and not in a contrary direction. If growth is natural to any thing it must be going on permanently on its path of growth. If it is the nature of a thing to run, it should ever be

running. If it is the nature of water to be cool, to be hot is not its nature, unless the heating element is combined with it. Inanimate nature exhibits only a single tendency. The contrary tendency cannot be its nature. It may be induced by the influence of an alien element. It is the nature of a piece of stone to lie unmoved in a place where it is thrown. Moving is not its nature. If it should be moved, it must be acted upon by a separate agency like the wind or the human hand. While this is the characteristic of an unintelligent entity, we should observe that the nature of an intelligent being is to move and stop according to its purpose. Bearing in mind this distinction between an unintelligent and intelligent entity we must observe the phenomena of the world and then we shall be able to realise the purposive influence of intelligent beings on unintelligent entities and also the influence of superior intelligences on inferior intellectual beings.

Everything in the world undergoes the process of birth, development and decay. If inanimate nature rules the world there will be only one process. Development may be going on but there will be nothing to stop it. If development is natural, its opposite process, called decay, cannot also be natural. It should be due to an alien influence. We have already seen that the world

has an intelligent purpose at its back and the purpose is effectuated by supreme intelligence. Hence the processes of the world should be due to and controlled by an intelligent God and not induced or led by blind nature.

It may be said that everything that has birth, growth and decay, is moved by a soul so that there are only a number of souls and no God. This view is short-sighted, because all things in the world are governed by a moral and physical order over which individual souls have no control and which presupposes the supremacy of a supreme intelligence. The world has a systematic unity and that unity can be brought about only by a unique power, whom we call the Almighty God.

The theory of the Logayats is that everything in the world is due to the spontaneous action of the elements. This is refuted on the ground that the elements have contrary qualities which can be brought into orderly activity only by an intelligent agency; for instance, if water and fire combine, both will neutralise themselves. The tendency of water is to go down and that of fire is to flare up. The earth will be under water and cannot by itself go between water and fire. If we want hot water an intelligent man should light the fire, place a pot over it, and pour water into the pot to make it hot. Hot water cannot be produced

by the earth, water and fire combining of their own accord in a creative manner.

It is the view of the Siddhantins that the whole world undergoes evolution and involution in fullness of time and hence, He who is the cause of involution should also be the cause of evolution. It is the opinion of certain schools of thought, like the jains, that the whole world does not suffer involution, but things in the world suffer a change. A scientific investigation of the processes of evolution and involution will convince us of the truth of a thorough involution. In making the investigation one should use not only the ordinary instruments of observation but include in it the Yogic vision or second sight. Those who had it, pursued the subject of involution step by step. Things in the world are resolvable into five elements and the elements themselves are traceable to subtler entities called Thanmatrai and they are traceable in modern science to a combination of electrons and protons. And these themselves, being microscopic forms of things, are resolvable into unformed prematter basic substratum which we call Maya and Maya is perceptible only to yogic vision. Great seers who had that vision have observed that by process of time, things reduce themselves to the Mayic substratum and rise again, taking forms from it. The wheel of time so

revolves that at distant times all the things in the world reach the Mayic stage and are then reproduced.

On the synthetic side, the universe is so built up that it has a central source of light and heat. Our sun is one of the many million stars that revolve round the central Sun of the Universe. Astronomers are able to calculate the time when our sun will lose all light and heat and then, the system of worlds, that depend for their life upon the light and heat of the sun, will turn to nought. Similarly if the central Sun of the Universe comes to an end, all the worlds constituting the Universe will collapse. And then the cosmic order will be at an end, When in our body one part is liable to suffer decay and death, it leads us to the inference that such decay and death may overtake the whole frame of which one limb or organ is a part. Similarly if our sun can be reduced to a mass of carbon alone, it may lead us to infer destruction of the central source of life for the Universe and consequential involution at a distant day of all that exist. Although the entire involution of the Universe cannot be seen directly, there is every reason to infer it from an understanding of the process of the world at large. Hence it cannot be affirmed that the Universe is eternal in its cosmic condition.

That the Universe becomes nothing is not our view. Just as when mud vessels are all broken and powdered they become the dust of the earth from which they can be re-made, the universe is reduced to the unformed Mayic substratum from which its multitudinous forms may be re-evolved. In the stage of involution the Universe is said to be in its causal condition and in its evolution it is said to be in its effectual cosmic condition. Hence the Universe never becomes nothing. It is a cardinal principle of Siddhantha that nothing comes out of nothing and something does not become nothing. It is the buddhistic view that everything appears and dies every moment of time and by contact with the preceding the succeeding thing comes into being. Then the question arises whether the succeeding thing takes its origin from a minute portion of that which precedes and dies or out of nothing. It is inconceivable that something can arise out of nothing. If the former is the case, then the statement that everything dies leaving nothing is meaningless. And if evolution has a material basis it must have an intelligent purpose at its back and we have already shown that such a purpose can be effectuated in the case of the Universe by the one unseen intelligent head of it. Hence the buddhist theory that evolution takes place without a creator cannot stand to reason.

The question is often asked whether, as the potter making vessels has a place to stand upon, the Creator has a place for Himself to reside. To that the answer is that one should observe how the soul energises the body without standing outside it and how the great course of time controls the processes of the Universe. There is a theory that time is the cause of evolution and involution. But this is untenable in the face of the Theological unity of the world. However great time may be, it is not an intelligent force and it can only be a tool in the hand of the Supreme Intelligence.

God, the cause of the involution of the Universe, reduces it to its Mayic substratum which is under His control. So if the Universe should again be evolved, such evolution should be brought about by Him who is the agent of its involution. The processes of the world are spoken of in religious books in terms of creation, preservation, and destruction entrusted to deities called Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. If we regard destruction as involution, the God who causes involution should be viewed as superior to the other two who are viewed in the Saivite religion as its agents through whom His power works. The reason is that if the Creator and the Protector can do their functions in spite of the destroyer, there will be no involution at all. Only when the activity of the two deities

is set at nought, the Destroyer can successfully cause involution. Since involution is a fact according to the Siddhantic view, the Creator and the Protector should become powerless to do their function when wholesale involution takes place. Hence at the end of the involution the God that remains unaflected by it should be its author. For every system, the Sastras speak of a set of the three deities. When all the systems undergo involution, the grand agent of the process can be the one over-ruling Providence who controls the whole Universe. It is the Saivite view that the one Supreme God causes the process of involution and evolution through His Sakti which plays its parts by taking manifold forms. The inferior agents of creation, preservation, and destruction are all animated by Siva-Sakti in diverse degrees of potency and the so-called dieties are all highly-evolved-souls subject to the sway of God's Sakti.

The purpose of evolution is a matter to be investigated. Evolution is said to be the *leela* or playful activity of God. Mere play cannot be an attribute of Providence. The purpose for which God creates the world cannot be selfish. Unless God is above the influence of desire, His actions cannot be fair and just. God is really independent of Maya. He is self-effulgent. He cannot have

any personal gain by evolution. Therefore he should cause it for the benefit of souls. As the result of evolution, souls take their bodies, dwell in them, and leave them, and under-go the cycle of births and deaths. Every body is microcosm within the microcosm of the world. What is called creation is providing the soul with body, mind, place, and enjoyable things, all of which are made of tatwas evolved from the Mayic substratum by the agency of Siva-Sakti or God's power. These are instruments for calling into play the knowing, feeling, and doing powers of the soul. Without body and mind, the soul will be immersed in ignorance which is called spiritual darkness. From the state of thraldom in darkness, the soul is led step by step, through the cycle of births and deaths to the ultimate goal of contact with God and realising His bliss. If evolution is needed for providing the soul with energising implements, involution is needed to provide the soul with required rest after the period of its activity, just as day is required for labour and night for rest. So it is for the benefit of souls that evolution and involution are caused by Providence. Just as after night's rest, one wakes up afresh for finishing labours remaining incomplete, the soul after remaining in rest during involution, rises up with renewed energy at the time of re-evolution for again pursuing its upward course towards God

remaining to be completed at the time of involution. Hence evolution, involution, and re-evolution have the purpose of the spiritual advance of the souls at their root and these take place not for any personal good of God, but out of his unselfish mercy for souls.

According to the Siddhantic view, souls are as eternal as God and they are not created out of nothing by God. They are not parts of God, because they do not possess qualities of God and are not above the cycle of births and deaths. They cannot be viewed as a group of the five senses, because the five senses have not the passion and activity of the soul, and Pranan is not the soul because it does not experience pain and pleasure. The soul undergoes different stages of consciousness during wakeful hours, dreams, sleep, deep sleep and suppression of breath. The mind is not the soul, because its several faculties have separate functions which require unification by the soul. A combination of mind, body, and such like implements cannot be soul by itself, because it cannot act without being moved by an intelligent entity. The soul being an intelligent entity, has not a material form inseparable from it. The soul is neither an atom nor a force filling the body. It identifies itself with anything that comes in contact and uses it as an instrument, since the senses and the mind

help to energise the intelligence of the soul and the organs of activity make the soul active. All these are spoken of as the instruments of the soul without which the soul cannot know and act. But since the instruments are themselves unintelligent, they do not supply intelligence to the soul. The soul's intelligence is rendered dormant by something which these Mayic instruments remove in part. That something is called Anavam or bond of ingnorance or darkness. Such ignorance cannot be an inherent quality of the soul which is by itself an intelligent entity. The element of darkness has rendered the soul's intelligence dormant and futile. When the soul takes up its body and mind, only a portion of the element of darkness is removed. The soul's intelligence is progressively developing with the aid of the said instruments. When it acts in the embodied condition, the good and bad results of its actions are termed Karma. Maya, as providing instruments for the development of the soul, is an element of brightness and not darkness to the soul, but as Maya does not help the soul to realise the Almighty above its level, it is viewed as a bond, limiting the vision of the soul. Since the activity of the soul, when it is in combination with Anavam and Maya, is not fully directed in the right way, Karma is also said to be one of the bonds which entangle the soul in the results of its actions. Hence Anava, Maya and Karma are said to be the

three bonds of the soul which should be got rid of, if the soul should rise to the level of God.

The question may arise how the soul can know God. The soul's vision is limited to things evolved from Maya. Whatever is seen, in the world, changes and disappears. God cannot be any part of the phenomenon which is evanascent. And if God is never knowable, what is the good of God to the soul? God cannot be realised with the aid of mind or senses or any such Mayic instrument. God's perception is infinite and things of the world are finite. If God knows the world it must be through his infinite wisdom. His intelligence is all-pervading and the soul can know Him if its vision be connected therewith. The soul has the nature to identify itself with anything that is duly put to it. When the soul turns away from the World towards God, it reaches a stage where God's Sakti or Wisdom contacts the soul. In such a stage God lifts up the soul, to His level of wisdom and the soul is then able to realise the Almighty. This lifting up by God is, in ordinary parlance, said to be the advent of God as Guru to the soul and giving it spiritual enlightenment. The soul blessed with infinite wisdom is the one emancipated from the bonds and able to be the medium of divine communication to others. The saintly leaders of the Saivite Religion were such advanced souls who poured forth their

spiritual experience in beautiful verses of hymns. Saint Meykandar and other exponents of Siddhanta Philosophy were advanced souls who had got realisation. They initiated their disciples to the ways of wisdom under the sway of the divine guru. Their methods of initiation were handed down to posterity through the heads of Dharmapuram and other Adhinams in the Tamil country.

There are various grades of initiation leading to different steps on the spiritual ladder. In the bound stage, the soul worships God indirectly through symbols and in the freed stage, the soul directly perceives the Almighty. The worship of the all-pervading, eternal, intelligent, blissful supreme-being through external forms is called *Sariyai* to which the initiation called *Samaya Diksha* befits a person. The worship of the cosmic form of the eternal Ruler of the Universe externally and internally is called *Kriyai.* The internal worship of Him as formless is called *Yogam.* For Kriyai and Yogam the requisite initiation is called *Visesha Diksha.* The direct perception of the Infinite in the light of the Infinite Wisdom vouchsafed by God through Gnana Gurus is called *Gnanam* and the initiation leading to it is called *Nirvana Diksha.* What is called *Acharya-Abishekam* is investing the advanced soul with power to initiate others. The heads of Adhinams receive Acharya-Abishekam before their installation.

In the freed state of wisdom there are four steps called Sariyai, Kriyai, Yogam, and Gnanam forming part of the domain of Gnanam. Directly listening to the word of God is called Sariyai in Gnanam, and indicated by the technical term *Kettal* (கேட்டல்). The contemplation of the received upathesam is Kriyai in Gnanam, which is technically called Sindittal (சிந்தித்தல்). The attainment of firmness in truth and concentration thereof is called Yogam in Gnanam, and is technically called Thelithal (தெளிதல்). The realisation of God and His bliss is called Gnanam in Gnanam, and technically known as Nittaikudal (நிட்டைகூடல்), which represents the final stage of evolution for the human soul on earth. Just as by the concentration of the sun's rays through a lens causes the cotton within its focus to catch fire, the concentration of God's grace through an Acharya awakens the perception of Inifinite Wisdom in the mind of the fit disciple who will thereby attain the capacity to look at the soul, the world, and God in the true perspective. Such a soul, will realise the fleeting character and futility of the world, and its own dependence upon God and the infinite power and grace of the Providence, and will take refuge under the feet of the Almighty from the evils of the world. The feet of God represent the over-ruling wisdom and activity of His to which the soul submits its knowledge and action. Such submission is spoken of as taking

shelter under the feet of God. In the state of such submission the soul remains safe and happy. In order that the soul may be steady in that attitude, the contemplation of the meaning of Panchakshara or five letters is essential.

In that five-lettered mantram Si-va-ya-na-ma (சிவாயநம) the term சி (Si) is the symbol for *Sivam* (God); வ (va) stands for *His Grace* that leads the fit soul to God; ய (ya) stands for the *Soul*; ந (na) represents the *screening power of God* that helps the Soul to move in the world, and ம (ma) represents the *bond* that entangles the soul in the turmoil of the world. If the soul turns towards ந (na) and ம (ma), it will fall a victim to the evils of life. If it associates itself with வ (va), it will rise towards God. Hence the mantram reminds the soul of the need for giving up the world and adhering to God's grace and moving Godward, when the thoughts of the world tempt the soul away from its attitude of wisdom. Standing in the light of wisdom is the result of *Kettal* (கேட்டல்) and contemplating the meaning of Panchaksharam is *Sindittal* (சிந்தித்தல்). Giving oneself up wholly to the control of divine grace by remaining in Adwaitic contact with God and having nothing to know or to save under the guidance of God's grace is called *Thelithal* (தெளிதல்) or in other words *Gnana yogam*. To go higher from

that step by cultivating eternal love for Providence and becoming immersed in divine bliss is called *Nittai-kudal* (நிட்டைகூடல்). Whoever reaches that stage in this life, remains unassailed by any troubles of the world and is called *Jivan Muktha*. It is that stage of which Saint Appar spoke, when he said, "Happiness and no sorrow for all times" (இன்பமே எந்நாளும் துன்பமில்லை).

Space forbids a more detailed treatment of the subject and we may conclude with the discussion about the nature of adwaitam as expounded in Siddhanta Philosophy. Adwaitam is a term applied to God in the Upanishads. It is associated with the diverse important systems of philosophy in this country and is often the main mark for distinguishing the philosophical religions now prevalent. Sankara is the exponent of the Kevaladwaita school of thought. Ramanuja is the founder of the Visishtadwaita system. Srikanta is the exponent of Sivadwaita system which is allied to Ramanuja's view. The Madhwa school of thought represents Dwaitam, and Saiva-Siddhantam is called Suddhadwaitam. An investigation of the meaning of the term Adwaitam will help us to understand the difference between the various systems.

The word Dwaitam means dual and the prefix 'a' (அ) is really 'na' (ந) which has three shades of

meaning among others. One is negation indicated by the Tamil term இன்மை. Second is difference in nature indicated by the term அன்மை; and opposition, which is the third, is indicated by the term மறுதலை. Nastigam is an illustration for the negative meaning of 'na' or 'a'. Abbrahmana really means one who is not a Brahmin and is an illustration of the second shade of meaning. The term (Aneedhi) or (Adharma) is an illustration of the third shade of meaning. Of these the negative meaning was adopted by Ekathmavathins who say there is only one Brahmam in existence and nothing else is real. As they posit the existence of only one Being, their doctrine is called Kevaladwaita (Monism). Although Ramanuja and Srikanta also adopted the negative meaning, they gave countenance to the Upanishads which spoke of souls and bonds; and therefore they stated that the one Brahmam was qualified by these as attributes and hence their theory was said to be Qualified Monism. The dualists adopted the third shade of meaning and said that one is in opposition to two and implied opposition to one as well, and hence there are two entities, God and Soul.

Now the question is, why should God be spoken of as Adwaita, while the word 'one' will more clearly and directly specify Him. Even granting that the term Adwaita indirectly points to one, who is it that speaks of God as one? If it is

the soul, then apart from the one God, existence of the soul is necessarily implied. The real reason for the use of the term Adwaita has not been investigated by other systems save in Saiva-Siddhantam. The term was really used to indicate the relation between God and the souls. God is of a different nature from the souls, though both are intelligent beings. Unless God is related to the soul in some way, it cannot do anything good for the soul. So God must be related in some way to the soul. There are various modes of relation between any two entities; Iykiam (ஐக்கியம்) as in the combination of the river and the sea; Thathatmiam (தாதாத்மியம்) as in the combination of quality and its possessor; Saiyogam (சையோகம்) as in the combination of one finger and another finger, and Adwaitam as in the combination of the light of the sun with the power of the eye to see things. The relaticn between the God and the soul cannot be Iykiam, because it implies substantial identity which does not exist between them. The soul cannot be viewed as the quality of God, because it is a separate entity possessing its own qualities. Qualities alone can be attributes of God. A possessor of qualities cannot be an attribute like a quality. The term Saiyogam cannot be applied to a union of a pervading thing and a pervaded thing like God and the world. Because the intelligence of God is in contact with the intelligence of the

soul and energises the same, the union of God and the soul is spoken of in Siddhanta as Adwaitic. Like the sunlight enabling the eye to see, which has its own power to see as well, the supreme intelligence enables the soul to perceive things with its own intelligence. The inseparable union of God and the soul is best expressed by the term Adwaita. As the Siddhanta system speaks of this true relation, its Adwaitam is said to be pure and simple, and hence it is called Suddhadwaitam. While Sankara's Adwaitam is qualified with the adjunct Kevala and Ramanuja's by the term Visishta, Meykandar's Adwaitam is unqualified. The term Suddha means unqualified. While Sankara and Ramanuja applied the term Adwaita to God alone, Meykandar applied the term to the relation between God and the soul of the world. Meykanda adopted the second shade of meaning, the அன்மை, which is the right meaning when 'NA'or'A' is prefixed to a word denoting a number. When we say Anekam, the term does not negate the existence of one. It means many as different from one, thereby showing that 'அ' prefixed to a number has the second shade of meaning and not the first or third. This discussion will help to enlighten us, that taking Adwaita in its true sensible meaning, the Siddhanta system of philosophy is the only Adwaitic system of thought which deserves the name.

Before the use of the term Adwaita, the relation of God to the soul was indicated as "ஒன்றாய், வேறாய், உடனாய்." God is intimately connect ed with the soul and the world, and hence, He was described as "ஊனாய், உயிராய், உலகாய்". Since God has a different nature from the souls, just the sun's light is different from the light of the eye, He is described as "வேறாய்". Although God is connected with the soul as the soul is connected with the body, the shortcomings of the soul do not attach to God while God is the guide of the soul and witness to its actions; He is said to be "உடனாய்" i. e., always with the soul, unaffected by its defects. So the Tamil expression "ஒன்றாய், வேறாய், உடனாய்" more clearly expresses the meaning of the term Adwaita in our system.

Here we have briefly sketched the salient points of the Saiva Siddhantha Philosophy, the expansion of which will cover a big volume. A simple statement of the nature of Pasu, Pasam, and Pathi has been given in Sivaprakasam and may be of value for understanding the essential data of the system, and passages relating to them are given below:-

Pasu: The seers of truth say that souls are countless, eternal and sunk in spiritual darkness. By the grace God, they take up bodies suited to work out their two-fold (good and evil) karmic

tendencies, and are born as lower and higher beings. In the course of experiencing the endless fruits of their karma, they commit acts of merit and sin, and have births and deaths. When the season arrives for the dissolution of the dark bond affecting the soul, the light of grace dawns on the inmost soul and darkness is dispelled. Then the good-freed-souls reach the feet of Providence".

Pasam: Bonds "The original Bond of darkness (Anavam) is one eternal entity with countless powers which lose their efficacy at the end of their respective time-limits. Compared with the stupefying force of this bond, external darkness may be said to be light. It is like green rust (verdigris) on copper and fully hides the knowing faculty of the soul. The screening power of God which operates behind this bond to loosen and finally dissolve, it is also formally styled one kind of bond. When the original bond is dissolved, this divine power shines forth in great grace and quickens the progress of the freed soul towards the feet of the Supreme Being, whose will, love, and power are symbolised by the Serpent, the Moon, and the Ganga on His Braids.

"Experts well-versed in rare Agamic sciences say that by the loving will of the Supreme Sivam beyond thought, the real nadham (the root of sound) is evolved from pure Maya; and from nadham the

real bhindu emanates. From it the brightening real Sadasivam takes its rise and gives birth to 'Iswaram', from which is developed Suddhaviddai. All these five reals are respectively ruled by five agents of divine power who stay in and take their names from them. Bhindu stated to be already evolved from Nadham first unfailingly gives rise to the world which develops into forms beginning with the subtlest."

"The impure Maya is a formless, motionless, unintelligent, eternal entity from which are evolved reals of diverse qualities and functions, and from combinations of which spring up the four categories (Thanu-Karana-Buvana-Bhogam) beginning with the bodies. It permeates all its developments and causes perversion to karmic souls. During final dissolution for all tatwas, it is the basic resort of all souls and is itself a bond of the souls. All these processes in it are due to the energising of it by the gracious might of the Supreme Being.

Karma: "Karma is the cause of bodies, and multifold bodily experiences, and causes births and deaths, and is beginning-less. It affects each soul differently and is many-sided. It is committed through thought, word, and deed, and it takes shelter in the real of the intellect. It takes the form of merit and sin, producing its two-fold result. At the time of the dissolution of reals,

Karma sinks down to the substratum of impure Maya. This is the nature of Karma."

Pathy: (God-head) It is the object of all the Vedas and the Agamas dealing with multifold sciences to expound the concepts of God, bound souls, and bonds (Pathi, Pasu and Pasam). Of these God-head is the highest. It is beyond the material distinction of form and no form; It has no finite quality or mark; It is one and eternal. It is the energiser of the intelligence of countless souls. It is changeless and infinite; Its form is bliss. It is above the ken (reach) of the perverted; but It is the final goal of the right-minded; It manifests itself in the smallest of the small and is the biggest of the big; It is self-effulgent; It is named *Sivam* by men of clear vision."

On a deep study of the system, the Saiva Siddhanta will be found to be invaluable for ascertaining the eternal verities of life and for solving the problems of God, Humanity, Evil and Good.

Gurupatham.

MESSAGE

Pursuit of a true philosophy is essential if the world is to eschew continual conflict and jealousy and reach wisdom and happiness. Truth leads to progress, growth, character and good life, for it is the home of happiness. It is truth that points to the kind of religious life which Mahatma Gandhi advocated - a life dedicated to love. Amongst the prevalent religions of the world Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity are the greatest. To Asia belongs the credit of giving these religions to the world. India can claim credit for giving birth to two of the founders of these religions. And, it is South India that codified the dynamic contents of the great Philosophical systems of Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa, and Meikanda. These thoughts contain in themselves qualities of growth and permanence. There

is no place in them for innovations from without; nor are they needed. They have always resisted the intrusion of meaningless rituals and traditions. Some of the rituals, therefore, that are obtained today, are based upon philosophical truths. The underlying aim of these religions is that man should exercise his reasoning faculties, dive deep into the ocean of intelligent thought and bring out pearls of happiness with which to adorn himself.

These religions have been built upon the triple foundations of determination, faith, and worship. The degree of determination which people acquire is also dependant on the success that attends their efforts. Our determination is strengthened and our thoughts kindled when we read the lives of our ancestors and the meritorious tasks performed by them. Determination takes root, the moment we link our lives with their's and act accordingly. And, faith protects determination from breaking to pieces. Determination and faith together lead man towards worship. It is but natural that different methods of worship should prevail between those who are wise and those who are but novices. A school cannot have only one class for all its students. While the wise worship ideals, novices will perforce have to see the worship of idols. A concrete object like a book serves to reveal abstract knowledge contained within. In like manner, images show the way to

intelligent contemplation; they allow scope for both physical labour and artistic advancement. The king among such images is that of Nataraja. There is art in this image; it symbolises knowledge, motion, and the force that motivates the atoms. To reveal these things is the object of philosophical pursuit. And this pursuit forms the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta. The religion of love that perceives everything through intelligence is capable for infusing self-confidence and happiness in the people. Happiness prevails where there is no fear or suspicion. The religious man who suspects others is like a cancer eating into the vitals of the country. He poisons peace and destroys unity. Let us therefore, march towards the castle of happiness on the road of progress, with patience as our prop and forbearance our guide!